2 P. 6. 30.

The SCALE OF PERFECTION And OTHER PIOUS DEVOTIONS.

Liber.

Written by WALTER HILTON.

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ex dono D. Jac. Nairne

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Chap. I.

That he, who intends to become a ſpiritual man, muſt firſt uſe much bodily exerciſe in pennance, and in deſtroying of ſinne.

Dear Brother in Chriſt,

THere be in the holy Church two kinds of life, by the which Chriſtian ſoules doe ſerve and praiſe God, and procure their own ſalvation; The one is corporall, the other ſpirituall.

Corporall working appertaineth principally to the men and women of the world, who for the nature of their eſtate doe, and may lawfully, uſe worldly goods, and intermeddle and deal with worldly goods, and intermeddle and deal with worldly buſi-

busineſſes and affaires. This life also belongeth to all young beginners in ſpirituallity, who be but newly converted from ſenſuall and worldly ſins to the ſervice of God: and this life is to diſpoſe and enable ſuch perſons for ſpiritual working, by taming the body by corporall workes and exerciſes, and thereby bringing it into obedience and ſubjection to the Spirit, whereby it may become ſupple and ready, and not much contrarious to the Spirit in her ſpirituall exerciſings, for as Saint *Paul* ſaith, that *woman was made for man, and not man for woman*; Even ſo corporall working was ordained for ſpiritual, and not ſpiritual working for corporall. Corporall working is to goe before, and ſpirituall working cometh after, as the ſame Saint *Paul* ſaith in theſe words; *That is not firſt which is ſpirituall, but that which is ſenſible* (or corporall) *afterwards cometh that which is ſpirituall*: And

And the reaſon why it ſhould be ſo is this, that we are born in ſin, and in corruption of the fleſh, by the which we are in ſoules ſo blinded and ſo overlaid, that we neither have the ſpirituall ſight or knowing of God by light of underſtanding, nor the ſpiritual taſting or feeling of him by a clear deſire of loving, and therefore we cannot ſuddenly ſtart out of the dark image of this fleſhly corruption into the ſpirituall light, for we are not as yet able to indure ſuch ſpirituall light, by reaſon of the ſickneſſe of our ſoules, any more than we can with our bodily eyes, when they are ſore, behold and look upon the light of the Sun; and for that cauſe we muſt expect and work by degrees, and proceſſe of time. Firſt, by corporall workes diligently, till we be diſcharged, or much lightened, or eaſed from this heavy burthen of ſin and ſenſuallity, that hindereth us from ſpirituall working, and till

our ſoules be ſomewhat cleanſed from great outward ſinnes, and enabled for ſpirituall workings. By the corporall working that I ſpeak of, thou muſt underſtand, that I mean all manner of good workes or deeds that thy ſoul doth by the ſences, or the members of thy body, either upon, or towards thy ſelf, as in faſting, watching, or in reſtraining of thy fleſhly or ſenſuall deſires, by pennance doing, or other acts of mortification: Or upon, or towards thy chriſtian brother, in performance of the workes of mercy, ſpirituall or corporall: Or to or towards God himſelf, by ſuffering (for the love of him and his juſtice) all manner of bodily paines and afflictions, that ſhall occurre for thee to undergoe, either as immediately from his own hands, or by the meanes, and from the hands of other creatures of his. All theſe kind of workes done in faith, and out of charity (without which they

are of no worth) doe pleaſe God. Therefore who ſo deſireth to become a ſpirituall man, it will be ſecureſt and profitable for him, that he be firſt, for a long time, well exerciſed in theſe corporall workings, for theſe corporall deeds are practiſes and tokens of morall vertues, without which a ſoul is not able to walke ſpiritually: Break down firſt pride within thee, by bodily ſufferings and bearings, and alſo by thinking in thy mind of ſomething that will help to humble thee, and moreover, by eſchewing and avoiding all oſtentations, boaſtings, or prayſings of thy ſelf, either privately by thy ſelf in thy mind, or by thy words, or external deeds, or carriage towards, or with others; by this means caſting away, and mortifying within thee, all vain-glory, and complacence in thy ſelf for any talent, gift, or thing corporal, or ſpiritual, that God hath beſtowed on thee: Alſo mortifie and deſtroy within thee,

ſo ſoon as thou art able, all envy, and anger towards thy Chriſtian brethren, whether they be rich or poor, good or bad, hate them not, nor diſdain them, nor willingly offend them by words, or by deeds. Likewiſe deſtroy and mortifie in thee all coveting of worldly goods, and ſee, that neither for the getting, or holding, nor ſaving of them, nor of any parcell of them, thou doe not offend thy conſcience, nor break charity with God, or thy chriſtian brother, for the love of any earthly thing; but what thou getteſt, or haſt, keep it without inordinate love or affection to it, and ſpend it as reaſonable occaſions ſhall require, for the honour of God, and the ſuccour of thy chriſtian brother: mortifie alſo and deſtroy as much as thou canſt, all yeelding to bodily ſloth, and unneceſſary bodily eaſe, and the ſenſuall vices of gluttony and luxury, with the inordinations that riſe out of them. And after

that

that thou haſt been well exerciſed and tryed in all ſuch kind of corporal works, thou mayeſt then, by the grace of God, ordain thee, and apply thee to ſpirituall working: The grace and goodneſſe of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he hath ſhewed to thee, in withdrawing of thine heart from the love and liking of worldly vanity, and from the uſe of fleſhly and ſenſuall ſinnes, and in turning of thy will intirely to his ſervice, bringeth into mine heart much matter to love him in his mercy, and alſoit greatly moveth and urgeth me to ſtrengthen thee in thy good purpoſe, and in the work which thou haſt begun between thee and God, ſo that it may be brought to a good end, and ſo far as may be in my power to help thee in it, and my beſt indeavours in it I ſhall moſt willingly afford thee, firſt and principally for the ſervice and honour of God, and next in requitall of thy tender affection of love

thou beareſt to me, though I be a wretch, and unworthy of thy love or favour; I know well the deſire of thy heart, as how that thou greatly coveteſt to ſerve our Lord both in ſoul and body, fully and wholly, without intermedling or troubling thy ſelf with worldly buſineſſes, that ſo thou mayſt, by the grace of God, attain to more knowledge, and ſpiritual feeling of God, and of ſpiritual things. Such deſire of thine is (as I hope) good, and from God; for it is ſet upon him in charity ſpiritually. Nevertheleſs as in regard of external matters and workings in them, ſuch deſire of thine is to be moderated and ruled with diſcretion, according to the nature and quality of thy eſtate, which thou art to regard in thy ſpirituall intentions, for charity unruled, that is, not rightly ordered, turneth ſometimes into a fault or vice: And therefore it is ſaid of our Lord by an holy ſoul in the holy

holy Scripture, *He hath ordered charity in me*, that is to say, our Lord giving to me charity, hath set it in order and good rule within me, whereby it might not erre in its exercise, nor left through my indiscreet doings as upon it. Even so the said desire and charity in thee, which our Lord hath wrought in thee, out of his goodnesse and mercy, must be so ruled and moderated, that in the exercises of it, it doe regard the nature of thy estate and condition of life, and the manner of living, which in former time thou hast held, and the measure and quantity of vertues that now are in thee. Thou must not altogether follow thy said desire, in giving over, or neglecting those businesses and cares of the world that are necessary, and doe belong to thee either for the upholding of thy own person in his degree, or in the ruling or ordering of other persons or things that pertain to thy charge,

and

and give thee wholly to retiredneſſe, ſpirituall devotions, and holy meditations, as if thou wert a Frier or a Monk, or another man, that were not bound (as thou art) to the world by children or ſervants; for itis not for thee to doe ſo, and if thou doeſt, then keepeſt thou not the order of charity. Alſo if thou wouldeſt altogether leave and forbear all ſpirituall exerciſes (eſpecially now after the grace and calling that God hath given thee for them) and give thy ſelf wholly to the buſineſſes of the world, in fulfilling of the works of the active life, as fully as doe other men, that never felt ſuch devotion, nor had ſuch grace or calling as thou haſt, thou doeſt then leave the order of charity, for thy ſtate requireth of thee to attend each of them in divers times: Thou ſhalt mingle the workes of the active life, with the ſpirituall works of the contemplative life, and then thou doeſt well, for thou ſhalt

ſome-

ſometimes be buſie, with *Martha*, for to order and govern thine houſhold, thy children, thy ſervants, thy neighbours, and thy tenants; if they doe well, comfort and help them therein, if they doe amiſſe, then tell and teach them for their amendment, and chaſtiſe them as there ſhall be cauſe. Thou ſhalt alſo wiſely look after, and know thy things, and thy worldly goods, as that they be well and duly uſed or preſerved by thy ſervants, well ordered, and reaſonably ſpent, whereby thou mayſt the more plenteouſly, out of thy temporall meanes, fulfill the deeds of mercy and charity towards thy chriſtian brethren. Alſo thou ſhalt ſometimes, with *Mary*, leáve, or lay aſide, the buſineſſes of the world, and ſhalt ſit down at the feet of our Lord with humility, in prayers, and holy thoughts, and in contemplation of him, according to the grace that he ſhall give thee for it, and ſo thou ſhalt goe from that

that one to the other, profitably and fruitfully and fulfill them both, and ſo doing, thou obſerveſt well the order of charity.

CHAP. II.

To what kind of men the active life pertaineth.

But that thou mayſt the leſſe wonder at that that I have ſaid, and that thou mayſt better underſtand the reaſon thereof, therefore I ſhall declare the matter a little more fully to thee. Thou muſt underſtand, that God is ſerved by three kindes of life, as either by an active life, or by a contemplative, or by a third, that is mixed of them both, and therefore is commonly called a mixt life. The active life belongeth to worldly men and women that are groſſe and ignorant, as to the underſtanding or knowledge of ſpirituall exerciſes or wayes,

wayes, for they neither feel nor taſte devotion by fervour of love as other men doe, nor can they well conceive what it is, or how it may be come by; and nevertheleſſe, they have in them the fear of God, and of the paines of hell, and therefore they eſchew and forbear ſin, and have a deſire for to pleaſe God, and to attain to heaven, and a good will they bear to their chriſtian brethren, unto theſe men it is needfull and ſpeedfull to uſe the workes of the active life, as diligently as they can in the help of themſelves and of their chriſtian brethren, for more they cannot doe.

CHAP. III.

To whom the contemplative life appertaineth.

THe contemplative life appertaineth onely to ſuch men and women, as for the love of God have for-

forſaken all notorious ſinnes, both of the fleſh, and of the world, and have given over all intermedling with the affaires and buſineſſes of the world, or with worldly goods, as alſo all care and charge over others, and all ſuperiority, or offices, that concern the government of others (if ever they had any, ſuch) and make themſelves poor, and as it were, naked from all the things of this life, ſave for what their corporall nature doth meerly need, and of neceſſity require. Unto theſe men and women it appertaineth diligently and ſeriouſly, to imploy themſelves in internall exerciſes, for to get thereby (through the grace of our Lord) cleanneſſe in heart, and peace in conſcience, by deſtroying of ſin, and gaining of vertue, and ſo to come to contemplation, ſince ſuch cleanneſſe (neceſſary for contemplation) cannot be had without much exerciſe of body, and continuall travell, or induſtry

induſtry in ſpirit, by devout prayers, fervent deſires, and ſpirituall meditation.

CHAP. IIII.

To whom appertaineth the mixt life.

THe third kind of life, that is called the mixt life, belongeth to Prelates of holy Church, and to their Paſtors and Curates, who have charge and ſuperiority over other men or women, for to teach and govern them, both as to their bodies, and as to their ſoules, and principally to animate and guide them in the performance of the deeds of mercy, both corporall and ſpirituall, towards their chriſtian brethren. Unto theſe men of the mixt life, it appertaineth to uſe the works of mercy in active life, in help and ſuſtenance of themſelves, and of their ſubjects, and of others alſo,

alſo, and ſometime for to leave all manner of externall buſineſſes, and to give themſelves to contemplative exerciſes, as to prayer, and meditations, reading of holy Scriptures, or other good books, or to ſome other ſpirituall exerciſes, according to what they ſhall feel themſelves diſpoſed. Alſo this mixt life appertaineth to ſome temporall men, who are owners of much land and goods, and have withall ſome dominion or maſterſhip over other men, for to govern and ſuſtain them, as a father hath over his children, and a maſter over his ſervants, and a Lord over his tenants, the which men have alſo received of our Lords gift, the grace of devotion, and in ſome meaſure a taſte and practiſe of ſpirituall exerciſe: unto theſe men, I ſay, belongeth the foreſaid mixt life, that is both active and contemplative; for if theſe men having (as they have) ſuch externall charge and care lying on them,

them, out of ſome obligation or neceſſity, would altogether leave, or neglect ſuch charge and buſineſſes of the world partaining to them, and give themſelves wholly to the exerciſes of contemplative life, they would not doe well in ſo doing, for they obſerve not the order of charity; for charity (as thou well knoweſt) conſiſteth in the love of God, and of thy chriſtian brethren: And therefore he that hath charity in him, will not by occaſion of his devotions, uſed immoderately towards God, omit that which he ought to doe towards his chriſtian brother, but will ſerve both God and them for God, at divers times, as now the one, and then the other, for he, that for the loving of God in contemplation, leaveth the loving of his chriſtian brother, and doth not perform towards them that which he ought, and is bound unto, he fulfilleth not the rule and obligation of charity. Likewiſe on the con-

contrary ſide, who ſo hath ſo great a regard to the workes of the active life, and to the buſineſſe of the world, that for the love of his chriſtian brethren, and the ſerving of them, he leaveth or neglecteth all ſpirituall exerciſes, God having given him a call thereunto, he fulfilleth not charity, and ſo ſaith Saint *Gregory*. For though our Saviour Chriſt, for to ſtirre up ſome to uſe the mixt life, took upon himſelf the perſon kind of men, both of Prelates, and of ſuch other as are of the ſaid mixt eſtate, and gave them example by his own working, that they ſhould upon occaſion uſe the exerciſes of the mixt life, as he himſelf did at thoſe times, that he ſpoke with men, and medled with them, ſhewing and exerciſing his deeds of mercy towards them, taught the ignorant by his preaching, viſited the ſick, and healed them of their diſeaſes, fed the hungry, and comforted the ſorrowfull; nevertheleſs

at

at other times he left the converſation of worldly men, and even of his own Diſciples, and went into the deſert upon the hills, and continued there all night all alone in prayers, as the Goſpel teſtifieth to us. And this mixt life did our Lord in himſelf exerciſe, and ſhew in the ſame manner, for an example to all other men, that have taken on them the ſtate or condition that requireth the exerciſes of the ſaid mixt life, that is to ſay, that they ſhould ſometimes apply themſelves to the externall affaires and buſineſſes belonging to that charge, and to the curing of ſuch their chriſtian brethren as pertain to them to look to, inſtruct, or provide for, and this to doe, according to reaſon, and diſcretion, and their need, and at another time to give themſelves to devotion, and to the exerciſes of a contemplative life, being principally (as before I have ſaid) reading and praying, and ſo drawing to contemplation

tion as near and as well as they can.

CHAP. V.

How holy Biſhops held and uſed the ſaid mixt life.

THe ſaid mixt life did holy Biſhops hold and lead, who had charge over mens ſoules, and had the miniſtration and diſpoſall of temporall goods; for thoſe holy men did not wholly forſake the adminiſtration, looking to, and the diſpoſall of worldly goods, and give themſelves altogether, or unreaſonably, to contemplation, notwithſtanding the grace and gift they had for contemplation, but very often, left their own reſt in contemplation (which for their parts they had much rather have continued in ſtill) for the love and ſervice of their chriſtian brethren, and were contented to intermeddle with worldly

ly buſineſſes, for ſuccouring and helping of thoſe that were under their charge: and ſurely ſuch doing of theirs was true charity. For juſtly and diſcreetly did they divide the time of their life into two parts, whereof the one they beſtowed in the lower part of love and charity, that is to ſay, in the workes of the active life (for they were bound thereto by taking on them their Prelacy:) and another part of their time they ſpent in the higher part of love and charity, and that was in the contemplation of God, and of ſpirituall things, by prayers and holy recollections, and ſo they had and held charity to God and their chriſtian brethren, both interiorly, by doing and performing good, corporal, or externall workes. Other men that were onely contemplatives, and were free from all cares and Prelacies, they alſo had charity towards God and their chriſtian brethren, but it was onely in-

interiorly in the affection of their ſoul, and not uſed outwardly in corporall deeds, and it may be it was ſo increaſed in it, through their contemplations, that they needed not to intermeddle with externall things for the bettering their charity; nor did it belong to their ſtate of life, to ſeek after ſuch externall workings, nor to intermeddle therewith, there being no neceſſity nor obligation for it on them; And ſo their internall charity ſufficed for them. But thoſe, whom before I mentioned, that were in Prelacy, and others alſo that were holy ſecular men, had perfect charity, both interiorly in their affection, and did alſo exerciſe the ſame exteriorly in bodily working or deeds, and ſuch doing is properly the mixt life which I have ſpoken of, conſiſting of the active and contemplative both together. And ſurely for ſuch men that are in ſpirituall ſuperiority, or have charge of the ſoules of

others,

others, as Prelates, Paſtors, and Curates have, or that are in temporall authority in the government of others, as worldly Lords and Maſters are, I hold this mixt life beſt, and moſt expedient, or neceſſary for them, ſo long as they remain in the ſaid ſuperiority and charge over others. But as for others that are free, and not obliged to any miniſtration, or ſuperiority, temporall or ſpirituall, I judge, that the contemplative life alone by it ſelf (if they have grace and calling to it) were, in truth, the beſt, the moſt expedient, moſt meritorious, moſt fair, and moſt worthy for them to uſe, and not willingly to leave it for any outward working of the active life, unleſſe it were in caſe of great need, as for the helping or comforting of ſome other men, either in their bodies, or in their ſoules, and need requiring it, he to goe about the doing of it, either when the party, or ſome other for

him requeſteth, and craveth at his hands the doing of it, or that himſelf ſees a meer neceſſity in the caſe, or elſe (being religious) when he is bidden by his Superiour to undertake or intermeddle with the work; In theſe caſes it will be good for the meer contemplative to ſhew his charity towards ſuch needing perſons by externall work for a time, and ſo doing, he obſerves the law and love of chriſtian and brotherly charity, and that done, to return to his ſolitude, and recollected life.

CHAP. VI.

What kind of life was moſt fitting for him, for whom this Treatiſe was made.

BY that which I have ſaid, thou mayeſt partly underſtand the differences between one and another of the foreſaid three kindes of lives,

lives; and thou mayeſt by what I have ſaid, alſo judge which of them beſt fitteth thee, ſince that our Lord hath ordained and ſet thee in a ſtate of ſuperiority (of ſuch nature as it is) and authority over others, and hath lent thee ſome ſtore of worldly goods and lands, by the which thou mayeſt, not onely maintain and ſuſtain thy ſelf, but alſo all thoſe other ſpeciall perſons, that are under thy authority and government, and mighteſt withall govern them according to thy beſt knowledge and ability; and therewith alſo thou haſt, through the goodneſſe of our Lord, received from him the grace for to know thy ſelf, and a ſpirituall deſire and taſte of his love. I am of the mind, that the life, which I have termed to be mixt, is beſt, and moſt befitting thee, and thou accordingly to divide and diſpoſe of thy times wiſely, and to the ſatisfaction of the foreſaid rule of charity. For know

thou

thou well, that if thou leave the ne-
ceſſary buſineſſe of the active life
belonging to thee, and be careleſſe,
and take no heed of thy worldly
goods, as how they be kept or ſpent,
nor lookeſt after thoſe that pertain
to thy charge to ſee they doe well,
nor wilt afford thy help upon the
neceſſity of thy chriſtian brother,
by reaſon of thy love, and deſire
thou haſt to apply thy ſelf onely to
ſolitude, and ſpirituall exerciſes,
imagining, that by ſo doing thou
art excuſed and freed from thy
foreſaid obligations: If (I ſay)
thou doe ſo, thou doeſt not wiſely,
nor profitably for thy ſoul, for
what are thy workes or exerciſes
worth (be they ſpirituall or cor-
porall) unleſſe they be done ac-
cording to juſtice and reaſon, to
the honour of God, and agreeable
to his will; ſurely they are even
nothing worth. Therefore if thou
leave or neglect that thing, which
thou art bound unto by the law

of charity, juſtice, or other obligation, and wilt intirely give thee to another thing, voluntarily taken on thee, under pretence of better pleaſing and ſerving of God, in a thing which thou art not bound unto, in ſo doing, thou doeſt no diſcreet or acceptable ſervice to him: In ſo doing thou art carefull to doe honour and worſhip to his head, and to his face, and to deck and adorn them fairly and curiouſly, but thou neglecteſt and leaveſt his body, with the feet, ragged and rent, and takeſt no care nor heed of them, nor doeſt thou any thing honour him in :hem, and it is but a ſhame, and an indignity, and no kind of honour, for a man to be curiouſly dreſſed, and decked about his head with Pearles and precious ſtones, and therewith to have all his body naked and bare, as it were a beggar: Even ſo ſpiritually, it is no honour to God, for one to crown his head, and leave his body

bare; for thou muſt underſtand, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as a man, is the head of his ſpirituall body, which is the holy Church, the members or limbes of his body are all chriſtian men, ſome are armes, ſome are feet, and ſome are other members, according to the qualities, condition, or eſtates they are of in the holy Church. And now if thou be diligent with all thy skill and ability for to deck and adorn his head, that is, for to honour him with the remembrance of his paſſion, and of his other workes done in his humanity, with devotion, love, and thankes to him for the ſame, and forgetteſt or negleƈteſt his feet (which are thy children, thy ſervants, thy tenants, and all thy chriſtian brethren) and letteſt them to decay or periſh for want of looking to, or to want clothing ſufficient, or other neceſſaries, or otherwiſe not looked unto, and provided for as they ought to

be,

be, then doeſt thou not pleaſe him, nor doeſt him any honour, thou ſeemeſt to kiſſe his mouth by devotion and ſpirituall prayer, but thou treadeſt upon his feet, and defileſt them, in as much as thou wilt not tend to them (through thy negligence) that belong to thy charge and care. This is my opinion and adviſe to thee in this point; nevertheleſſe if thou be of the mind that I ſay not aright in this matter, for that thou thinkeſt it were a fairer and more pleaſing office to God, for to doe honour to his head, as to be all day devoutly thinking of his paſſion, and producing acts of inward affection upon it, then for to goe home to other workes that are more externall, and make clean his feet, as for to imploy thy ſelf both in words and deeds about the helping or other benefitting of thy chriſtian brethren, in ſo thinking thou thinkeſt amiſſe, and miſtakeſt: For ſurely he will more thank thee,

and

and reward thee, for the humble washing of his feet when they are very foul, and yeeld an ill savour to thee, than for all the curious painting, and fair dressing or decking that thou canst make about his head, by thy devotest remembrance of his humanity; for it is fair enough and needeth not much decking or dressing from thee; but for his feet, and his other limbes, that are sometimes ill arrayed, and have need to be helpen by thee (namely sithence thou art bound thereto) our Lord will render thee more thanks, if thou wilt humbly and charitably look unto them: For the lower or meaner that the service, which thou dost to thy Lord seemeth to be, in regard they are performed towards his members, and not immediately towards himself, yet doing it for the love of him, when reasonable occasions or need require it, and that with a chearfull and humble heart, thou much more pleasest

pleaſeſt him, than in ſervice immediately done to himſelf, with omiſſion of theſe offices of need or charity towards thy chriſtian brethren. And that thou mayeſt be the more willing to goe about ſuch an imployment, thou ſhalt doe well to think, that it is ſufficient, and beſt of all, for thee to be imployed in the very leaſt degree, and loweſt eſtate of his ſervice, eſpecially ſince it is his will that it be ſo. For thou muſt think, that ſince he hath put thee into that charge and eſtate of life, that it is the very beſt for thee, and that thou canſt not doe better, than in performing what belongs thereto in the beſt manner, and with all the willingneſſe and gladneſſe of mind that thou art able: This I tell thee not, as though that already thou doeſt, and better too, but to the end, that thou ſhouldeſt do it with more alacrity and chearfulneſſe, by occaſion of this my writing, and ſhouldſt not think it

much, ſometimes to leſſen or forbear thy ſpirituall exerciſe for to goe and deal in worldly affaires pertaining to thee and thy eſtate, as to the looking and ſeeing too, that thy goods be well kept and ſpent, but according to reaſon, look to the other behaviours of thy ſervants, treat with thy tenants about the things which they owe, or ought to perform towards thee, and doing other good deeds towards thy chriſtian brethren, according to thy ability and their need, but ſhouldeſt perform both theſe workes and exerciſes, that is to ſay, the internall and externall, at divers and ſeverall times, and with as good a will the one as the other, ſo farre as thou canſt. As for example, if thou haſt been at thy prayer and ſpirituall exerciſe, that finiſhed, thou ſhalt goe and buſie thy ſelf in ſome corporal or externall doing concerning thy chriſtian brethren, and therefore

ſpend

ſpend reaſonable time with willingneſſe and gladneſſe of mind: And after that thou haſt been buſily imployed for a time about thy ſervants, and other men with whom thou ſhalt have occaſions, and haſt profitably ſpent with them ſo much time as ſhall be truly needfull, thou ſhalt then break from theſe externall doings, and ſhalt return again to thy prayers and devotions, which thou ſhalt perform according to the grace that God ſhall give thee for it; and ſo doing, thou, by the grace of our Lord, ſhalt put away and avoid ſloth, lazineſſe, idleneſſe, and vain reſt, which often creep upon us through the deceitfulneſſe of our nature, under pretence or colour of contemplation, or other ſpirituall recollections, whereby we come to omit the performance of good and meritorious externall affaires and buſineſſes, pertaining to us and our charge, by the appointment or providence

vidence of God. And thus thou ſhalt be alwayes in ſome good exerciſe or other, internall or externall, by turnes, and in their proper times: Therefore thou ſhalt doe well to obſerve and doe that ſpiritually, that is, in thy carriage in a ſpirituall life, which *Jacob* did in a matter that was onely corporall or externall. The holy Scripture telleth, how that *Jacob*, when he began to ſerve his Maſter *Laban*, he coveted *Rachell* his Maſters daughter, for her fairneſſe, to be his wife, and for the having of her he ſerved ſeven yeares, but when he had thought for to have had her to his wife, he had firſt *Leah*, the other daughter inſtead of *Rachell*, and afterwards he takes *Rachell*, and ſo he had both at the laſt. By *Jacob* in holy Scripture is underſtood, an overcomer of ſinnes; by thoſe two wives are underſtood, as Saint *Gregory* ſaith, the two kindes of lives that are in the holy Church, which

which are the active life, and the contemplative life; *Leah* is as much to ſay, as labour and painfull working, and betokeneth the active life: *Rachell* is as much to ſay, as a ſight of the beginning, which is God, and betokeneth the contemplative life: *Leah* bare children, but ſhe was ſore eyed; *Rachel* was faie and lovely, but ſhe was barren: And now even as *Jacob* coveted *Rachell* for her fairneſſe, and yet had her not when he would, but firſt took *Leah*, and afterwards *Rachell*: Even ſo every man labouring and heartily ſeeking (by compunction for his former great ſinnes of the fleſh and of the world) now to become a new ſervant to God in cleanneſſe of good living, hath a great deſire to have and come by *Rachell*, which is to have reſt in ſpirituall ſweetneſſe, devotion, and contemplation, for it is ſo fair, and ſo lovely a life, that in hope for to have it, he determined with himſelf,

ſelf, by the grace of our Lord, for to ſerve him with all his diligence and might; but oft times when he thinketh to have *Rachell*, that is, reſt in devotion, our Lord ſuffereth him to be well exerciſed and tryed, either with the temptations of the world, or of the devill, or of his fleſh, or elſe with ſome externall buſineſſes and doing, corporal or ſpirituall, in help or ſuccour of his chriſtian brethren, and when he is thus well exerciſed, and in travailes with *Leah*, and is well nigh overcome, then our Lord giveth him *Rachell*, that is, grace, and devotion,, and reſt in conſcience, and then hath he both *Rachell* and *Leah*; ſo ſhalt thou doe, according to the example of *Jacob*, theſe two lives, active and contemplative, ſince God calleth and enableth thee for both, and uſe the one with the other of them: By the one life (which is the active) thou ſhalt bring forth the fruit of many

many good deeds in help of thy christian brethren: and by the other shalt thou be made to become fair, clear sighted, and clean in the supream brightnesse and beauty, which is God, the beginner and ender of all that is made, and then shalt thou be truly *Jacob*, and an out-goer and overcomer of all sinnes; and after that, by the grace of God, thy name shall be changed as *Jacobs* name was, and turned into *Israel*, and *Israel* is as much as to say, *a man seeing God*: Therefore if thou be first *Jacob*, and wilt discreetly use these two lives afterwards, in time thou shalt be *Israel*, that is, a true contemplative, either in this life, if God will deliver thee, and make thee free from the charges and businesses which thou art bound to, or else after this life, fully and perfectly in the blisse of heaven when thou comest thither. A man shall desire a contemplative life, for it is fair and full

of

full of merit, therefore thou ſhalt ever have it in thy mind, and in thy deſire, but thou ſhalt have in *uſing* active life, for it is both expedient and neceſſary. Therefore if upon juſt occaſions, either concerning thy children, or thy ſervants, or any other of thy chriſtian brethren, for their profit, or their hearts eaſe, upon reaſonable cauſe, asking it of thee, thou be put from thy reſt in devotion, when thou hadſt much rather ſtay ſtill thereat, be not angry with them, nor heavy or ſad within thy ſelf, ſo far as thou art able to help it, nor afraid, as if God would be angry with thee, that thou leaveſt him for any other buſineſſe or doing, for he will not be angry, but well pleaſed and delighted thou ſo doe: And therefore in ſuch a caſe, readily leave off thy devotion of what kind ſoever it be, and goe about the deed, being ſervice to thy chriſtian brethren, and that as willingly

ly and readily, as if our Lord himſelf had called and bidden thee to goe about it: doe ſo; I ſay, and indure the difficulty thou findeſt in it for his love; and put away all grudging about it, ſo farre as thou canſt; as alſo all bitterneſſe and offence taken againſt thy chriſtian brother for calling thee to the ſaid imployment.

CHAP. VII.

That a mans devotion ſometimes will be the greater, by reaſon of the outward work, which before out of charity he had been in hand with.

AND it may fall out ſometimes, that the greater trouble thou haſt exteriorly had in doing of thy active workes, the more inflamed deſire ſhalt thou afterwards have to God, and the more ſight of God and ſpirituall things, through the grace

grace of our Lord, in devotion when thou comeſt thereto, for it fareth thereby, as if thou hadſt a little cole of fire, and wouldeſt make a fire therewith, and make it burn, thou wouldeſt firſt lay to ſome ſticks, and with them over cover the cole, ſo thát there is as yet no ſhew or ſeeming hope of fire by it, nevertheleſſe, when thou haſt abiden a while, and afterwards bloweſt it a little, anon, ſuddenly there will ariſe out a great flame of fire, ſo that the ſticks will be turned all into fire: Even ſo is it ſpiritually, thy will and thy deſire that thou haſt to God, is, as it were, a little cole of fire in thy ſoul, for it giveth to thee ſomewhat of light, and of ſpirituall heat, but it is very little that it giveth, for often it waxeth cold, and turneth to a fleſhly reſt (or into a reſt in fleſh and ſenſuallity) and ſometimes into idleneſſe, and doing of no good, therefore it is expedient, that thou put

to

to ſticks, that is, ſome workes of the active life; and though it be ſo, that thoſe works doe ſeem for a time to be a let to thy deſire, ſo that it may not be ſo intire, nor ſo fervent as thou wouldeſt it were, yet be not daunted nor troubled thereat, but abide and ſuffer awhile, and ſo blow at the fire, that is, firſt goe and doe thy works, and afterwards goe alone to thy prayers and devotions, and lift up thine heart to God, and pray him, that of his goodneſſe he will accept thy works that thou doeſt, and receive them to his honour and glory, hold them as nothing in thine own ſight, nor to be of any worth, ſave ſo farre as God onely out of his goodneſſe ſhall vouchſafe to accept of them; humbly acknowledge thy wretchedneſſe and frailty, really attributing thy good deeds to him, for ſo much as they have any goodneſſe in them, and in as much as they are bad, or not done diſcreetly,

ly with all circumſtances requiſite for a good deed, aſcribe them to thy ſelf, and then for this humility ſhall all thy good deeds turn into a flame of fire, as doe ſticks laid upon a cole, and thou thus doing, thy externall good deeds ſhall not hinder thy devotion, but rather increaſe it. And moreover, our Lord ſaith in holy Scripture thus, *Fire ſhall alwayes burn in my Altar, and the Prieſt riſing up in the morning ſhall put wood thereunto, ſo that the fire may not be extingniſhed*: This fire is love and deſire to God in a ſoul, the which fire requireth, that it be nouriſhed and maintained by laying to ſticks, ſo that it may not goe out, and theſe ſticks are of divers matters, as ſome of one kind of wood, and ſome of another. A man that is learned, and hath ſome underſtanding in the holy Scripture, if he have this fire of devotion in his heart, it is good for him to get him ſticks of holy examples and

and devout prayers, and nouriſh the fire with them. Another man that is unlearned cannot ſo readily have at hand the ſayings of holy Scripture, or of Doctors for the purpoſe, and therefore it is neceſſary for him to doe many good externall deeds to his chriſtian brethren, and thereby maintain and exerciſe towards them the love he beareth them for God. And ſo it is good, that each man in his degree, and according to what is moſt agreeable to the benefit and diſpoſition of his ſoul, doe get him ſticks of one thing or another, as either by praying, conſidering, meditating, or reading in ſome good and devout book, or in doing of ſome corporall or externall work, thereby for to nouriſh in his ſoul the fire of love, ſo that it may not become quenched; for the affection of love is dainty and tender, and will eaſily goe out and vaniſh away, unleſſe it be well kept, and

continually nouriſhed by good deeds or exerciſes corporall or ſpirituall: Now therefore ſince our Lord hath put into thine heart a little ſparkle of this bleſſed fire, that is, *himſelf* (as holy Scripture ſaith) *our Lord is a conſuming fire*: for as a materiall fire waſteth all bodily things that may be waſted, ſo a ſpirituall fire, that is God, waſteth all kind of ſin, and therefore our Lord is likened to fire, waſting: I pray thee to nouriſh this fire within thee: This fire is nothing elſe but love and charity: This hath he ſent into the earth, as he ſaith in the Goſpel, *I came to ſend fire into the earth, and to what end, but that it might burn*; that is, God hath put into mans ſoul a fire of love, and a good deſire, and a great good will for to pleaſe him, and that he hath done to this end, that man ſhould know it, keep it, and nouriſh it, and ſtrengthen and increaſe it, and thereby be ſaved. The greater

deſire

desire that thou hast to him and for him, the greater is the fire of love in thee, and the lesse that the desire is in thee, the lesse is the fire. The quantity or measure of thy desire within thee, as how much it is, neither thy self doth know, nor doth any man know how great it is in him, much lesse the quantity of love, that is in another man, God onely knoweth it, or he to whom God shall reveal and make it known. And therefore dispute not with thy self, as if thou wouldest know how great thy desire is; be busie and serious to desire as much as thou canst, but not to know the quantity or measure of thy desire.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

What the desire of God for himself is, and how that in cleanneſſe of conſcience is found true comfort and ſweetneſſe.

SAint *Auguſtine* ſaith, that *the life of every good chriſtian man is a continuall deſire to God*, and ſuch deſire is of great power and vertue, for it is a great crying in the eares of God; the more fervently thou deſireſt, the higher thou cryeſt, the better thou prayeſt, and the wiſer are thy thoughts: And what is this deſire? ſurely nothing but a loathing of all this worldly bliſſe, a forſaking of all fleſhly or ſenſuall love in thine heart, and an extream loving with a moſt hungry longing and thirſting after God, and the everlaſting bliſſe of heaven: this is that may be called a deſire of God for himſelf; if thou haſt this deſire,

deſire, as I verily hope and believe that thou haſt, I pray thee keep it well, and nouriſh it diligently, and when thou ſhalt pray or meditate of God, make this deſire of him to be the beginning and finall intention of ſuch thy exerciſes, and of all other thy works and deeds, thereby to increaſe; hold this thy ſoul, and if thou haſt it not there as yet, get it in as well and as ſoon as thou canſt of the gift of God, from whom it muſt come. Seek and nouriſh onely this, and ſeek not after any feeling in thy corporall ſenſes, externall or internall, nor any ſenſible ſweetneſſe or devotion, neither by thy ear, nor by the taſte of thy pallate, nor by any wonderfull light or ſight of thy eyes, nor ſeek the ſight of Angels, no, though our Lord himſelf would appear in his body to the ſight of thy eyes, make no great matter of that; for all ſeeming ſights, by thoſe ſenſes of the body, cannot give thee a light

of the divinity; nor can any thing benefit thy ſoul (though yet being true, and from God they are good) in compariſon of the aforeſaid love and deſire of God in thy ſoul, which onely is capable of the true ſight and love of God; and therefore let all thy diligence be, that thou mayeſt truly and really perceive and find in thy ſoul, and eſpecially in thy will, a loathing and full forſaking of all manner of ſin, and of all manner of uncleanneſſe, with a ſpirituall ſeeing or perceiving, how foul, how ugly, and how painfull theſe things be: and that thou mayeſt have within thee a mighty deſiring of vertues, and namely, of humility, and charity, and finally, of the bliſſe of heaven: This that I ſhall now tell thee, were (as I would think) a ſpirituall comfort, and a ſpirituall ſweetneſſe in a mans ſoul; and that is, to have cleanneſſe in conſcience from wickedneſſe, and from all worldly vanities,

nities, with a firm faith, and humble hope, and a full desire of God: Howsoever it be for having of other comforts and sweetnesses, I esteem that sweetnesse to be true, sound, and secure, that is felt in cleannesse of conscience, with a strong will of forsaking and loathing of all sinnes, and with inward sight and fervent desire of spirituall things: all other comforts and sweetnesses caused by any manner of feelings, unlesse they lead or help to the said end, that is, to cleannesse of conscience, and spirituall desire of God, are not secure to rest on.

But now thou wilt perhaps ask, *Whether this desire of God be love to God?*

As to that I answer and say, That this desire is not properly love, but a beginning and taste of love, for love properly is a perfect uniting and coupling together of the lover and the loved into one; as for example, perfect love maketh them to

be, as if they both together were but one thing: But ſuch perfect coupling and union may not be had in this life, but onely in deſire and longing thereto, as by the example that I ſhall now deliver thee: If a man love another man that is abſent, he greatly deſireth his preſence: Even ſo ſpiritually, as long as we are in this life, our Lord is abſent from us, ſo that here we may neither ſee him, nor feel him as he is, and therefore not able (for want of ſuch ſight and feeling) here to love him, in fulneſſe, and perfection, and in reallity, as we might doe, if we had the ſight of him really, and as he is in his own being, the which, becauſe we have not, nor ſhall have in this life, therefore all that we can doe here is, to have a deſire and a great longing and thirſting for to be preſent with him, and ſee him in his bliſſe, and to be fully and perfectly united unto him in love. This deſire we may have

have in us (of his gift) in this life, by the which we ſhall be ſaved, for it is love unto him, ſuch as may here be had. Saint *Paul* ſaith thus, *We know, that while we are in this body we are pilgrims* (or ſtrangers) *from God:* that is, we abide in this earth, or baniſhment, abſent from heaven, for we here walk by faith and not by ſight (that is, we here live in faith, not in reall ſight of him as he is) but we are bold, and have a good will, rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent to our Lord (that is, we through cleanneſſe of conſcience, and ſure truſt of ſalvation, dare deſire parting from our body by bodily death, and thereupon be preſent to our Lord, nevertheleſſe becauſe as yet we may not) therefore we indeavour, whether preſent or abſent, to pleaſe him; that is, we ſtrive againſt the ſinnes of the world, and pleaſures of the flesh, and ſenſuallity, by deſire to him, ſeeking to burn

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and consume in the fire of such our desire, all things that may let or hinder us from him.

But thou wilt perhaps further ask me, *Whether a man may continually have this desire in his heart?* and thou perhaps thinkest that he cannot.

As to that I will answer, according to my opinion in it, which is, that thou mayest have this desire in thine heart and intention, virtually or habitually, alwayes and continually, but thou canst so have it, as to working or exercising upon it, as thou mayest better understand by this example; if thou were sick, thou wouldest have, as every man in such a case hath, continually a naturall desire in thine heart of bodily health, and this whether thou be asleep or awake, but art thinking of some things, thou hast then such a desire, onely in intention or habit, and not in using or acting upon it: But when thou thinkest

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on thy bodily ſickneſſe, or on thy health, then haſt thou thy ſaid deſire of health in uſing and acting: Even ſo is it in externall deeds for thy ſelf or for thy chriſtian brother for God.

Now if thou ask me, by what meanes thou ſhalt keep this deſire, and nouriſh it? I ſhall tell a little in that point, not with the meaning that thou ſhalt or muſt uſe the ſelf ſame form that I tell thee for it, but that thou thereby have ſome kind of generall example, whereof thou ſhalt make uſe upon thy need, and according to thy manner, not my manner, unleſſe mine ſeem more for thy purpoſe, for I neither may nor can tell thee fully what is beſt for thee to uſe; but I ſhall tell thee ſomewhat according to what I think.

CHAP. IX.

How thou ſhalt diſpoſe thee to devotion.

IN the night after thy ſleep, if thou wilt riſe to pray and ſerve our Lord, thou ſhalt feel thy ſelf at the firſt to be fleſhly, heavy, and as it were drowned in ſenſuallity, and ofttimes impertinent thoughts of the world or other vanities preſſing into thy mind: But then ſhalt thou diſpoſe thee to pray, or to think ſome good thought, for to revive and quicken thine heart rowards God, and doe thee uſe all thy diſcreet induſtry, for the drawing up of thy thoughts from worldly vanities, and from vain imaginations that come into thy mind, that ſo thou mayeſt feel ſome devotion in ſuch vocall prayers as thou ſhalt then uſe, if thou uſe any ſuch; or elſe (if thou wilt) enter thou into ſome

ſome ſpirituall thoughts, whereby thou mayeſt not remain hindred and troubled with ſuch vain thoughts of the world, or of thy fleſh. And now as for matter of good thoughts for thee, thou muſt know, that there be divers matters of ſuch thoughts or meditations, but which of them were beſt for thee to take and uſe, I cannot tell thee; but I trow, that ſuch matter and manner of thinking or meditating, wherein thou feeleſt greateſt guſt, facility, and eaſe, or pleaſure, is beſt for thee to uſe, ſo long as it continueth ſo gratefull to thy ſpirit. Thou mayeſt (if thou wilt) ſometime think on thy ſinnes heretofore committed, and of the frailties into which thou daily falleſt, and ask mercy and forgiveneſſe for them. Alſo after this thou mayeſt think on the frailties, and ſinnes, and miſeries, corporall and ſpirituall, of thy chriſtian brethren, with pitty and compaſſion of them,

and ask mercy and forgiveneſſe for them as tenderly as for thy ſelf, and as if thou hadſt done them, and that is a good exerciſe for the time: For I tell thee for truth, that thou mayeſt make of other mens ſinnes a precious oyntment for to heal thine own ſoul, when thou thinkeſt on them with compaſſion and ſorrow for them; this oyntment is precious and very medicinable, though the ſpicery or things, whereof it is compoſed, be not clean, or otherwiſe wholſome; for it is a Triacle or Methridate made of poyſon for to doe away and deſtroy poyſon; that is to ſay, thine own and other mens ſinnes: If thou beat and bruiſe them well with ſorrow of thine heart, pitty, and compaſſion, they turn into Triacle or Methridate, that will cleanſe and make whole thy ſoul from pride and envy, and bring into it love and charity to thy chriſtian brethren, ſuch thought is good for thee ſometimes

times to take into thee.

CHAP. X.

How a man is to think on the humanity of Christ.

ALso for thy exercise of devotion, thou mayest think upon the humanity of our Lord, as of his birth, or of his passion, or of any other of his workes, and feed thy thought with spirituall imagination thereof, for to move thine affection more to the love of him. This thought (I mean, of something of our saviours humanity) is good and expedient, namely, when it cometh freely of Gods gift, with devotion and fervour of spirit, else a man will not likely find taste or devotion in it: And if he have it not with such facility and sending of God, I think it not expedient, that a man should much force himself in it, as if he would get it by violence

lence (I mean, for using in his exercise or thought, some point or matter of our Saviours life or passion) for so doing, he might hurt his head and body too, and yet be never the near: Therefore I think that it is good for a man to have in his mind and thought, sometimes our Saviours humanity, or some matter thereof, and if devotion come withall and relish, or gust found in it, then to hold it, and follow it for a time, but leave off soon, and hang not long thereon: And if devotion come not by thinking of the passion, strive not, nor press too much for to have and come by such devotion or feeling in it, but take what will easily come, and if it come not easily, betake thee to some other matter, wherein thou think'st or hopest to find more devotion or gust.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

How a man ſhall think on vertues, and upon the Saints.

ALſo other thoughts there be that are more ſpirituall, as to think on vertues, and to ſee by light of underſtanding the vertue of humility, what it is, and what great reaſons be why a man ſhould be humble; and alſo what is patience, cleanneſſe in ſoul, juſtice, charity, ſobriety, and other ſuch like vertues, and how worthy it is, that a man ſhould labour for the getting of them, and of the meanes by which they may be gotten, and by ſuch thoughts to have a great deſire and longing to the having of thoſe vertues; and alſo for to have a ſpirituall ſight of the three principall, or Theologicall Vertues, Faith, Hope, and Charity. By the ſight and deſire of theſe Vertues a ſoul

ſoul ſhould ſee and feel much grace of our Lord, without which grace a mans ſoul is half blind, and without ſpirituall ſweetneſſe or taſte. Alſo for to think on the Saints, as the Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſors, and holy Virgins, beholding in his interiour their holy living, and the grace and vertues that our Lord gave them in their life, and by the remembrance and conſideration hereof, to ſtirre thy heart for to take example from them, for leading a better and perfecter life.

CHAP. XII.

How a man ſhall think of the holineſſe of our Lord Jeſus, and of our bleſſed Lady,

ALſo the thinking and conſidering (above all other Saints) of our Lady Saint *Mary*, and her excellency in grace and vertues, is a good matter for raiſing and

and exercise of devotion, by seeing with thy spirituall eye the abound-dance of grace that was in her holy soul, when she was here living, which our Lord had given her, a-bove what he gave to any of the other Saints; for she was replenished with all vertues, without one spot of sin, shewing and manifesting by her life perfect humility, and fulness of charity, with the beauty and excel-lency of all other vertues, the which vertues altogether, made her so ho-ly, that there would no temptation, or motion of pride, or envy, wrath, or anger, sensuall delight, or of any other kind of sin or imperfection enter into her heart, or defile her soul in any part of it. By the be-holding of the beauty and excel-lency of this blessed soul, a mans heart should be moved and put in-to a great spirituall delight and comfort. And much more than above that, is the beholding of the soul of our Lord Jesus, the which

soul

ſoul of his was fully and wholly united to the divinity, excelling, without any compariſon, our bleſſed Lady and all other creatures. For in the paſſion of Jeſus are two natures, that is, God and man perfectly united together by the vertue of this moſt bleſſed union, which cannot be expreſſed, nor yet conceived by mans wit or underſtanding; the ſoul of Jeſus hath received the perfection and fulneſſe of all wiſdome and goodneſſe, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *The fulneſſe of the divinity doth dwell in Chriſt corporally*, that is, the divinity of God was fully united to the humanity (or mans nature) in the ſoul of Jeſus, and ſo by the meanes of his ſoul dwelled in his body, the remembrance of the humanity of our Lord after this manner (that is, to regard the vertues and ſurpaſſing grace of the ſoul of Jeſus) ſhould be right comfortable to a mans ſoul.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of seeing and beholding the power (by some consideration or thinking) the wisdome, the goodnesse, and the mercy of God in his Creatures.

ALso the remembrance of the power the wisdome, and the goodnesse of our Lord in all his Creatures, for as much as we living here on earth, cannot see God fully, and as he is in his essence, therefore we are to see and behold him, love and fear him, upon the sight and consideration of his Creatures and his workes; and in them also are we to admire and wonder at his power and goodnesse: Also for to think on the mercy of our Lord, that he hath shewed to me and to thee, and to all sinfull captives, that sometimes were in bondage to the devill, through our greatnes and multitude

multitude of ſins, how he patiently ſuffered us to live in our ſin, and in our heynous contempts of him, and work no revenge on us for the ſame, as he moſt juſtly might have done, and might moſt worthily have caſt us down head-long into hell, if his love had not hindered him; but out of love he ſpared us, and ſent his grace into our ſoules, taking us out of the ſtate of heynous ſinnes, and by his grace hath turned our will intirely unto him, and made us thereby, for the having of him, and for his love, to forſake all manner of ſinn. The remembrance of his mercy and goodneſſe, in theſe and in other matters and points more and greater than I can now reckon up, may juſtly cauſe and bring into a ſoul a great truſt and confidence in our Lord, and a full hope of ſalvation, and greatly inflameth the deſire of love to aſpire to the joyes of heaven.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

How the consideration and thinking on the miseries and perills of this life is apt to breed in a soul the desire of heaven.

ALso to think upon the miseries, mischeifes, and perils, corporall and spirituall, that happen in this life, and after that to think of the joyes of heaven, as how great happinesse is there, and what wonderfull joy and delight; for there is neither sin, nor sorrow, nor passion, nor pain, hunger, nor thirst, aches, nor sickness, doubt, nor fear, shame, nor blame, nor want of power, nor strength, nor lack of light, nor coldnesse in love, but there is most excellent beauty, clearnesse, strength, health, everlasting delights, perfect wisdome, love, peace, honour, security, rest, joy, and bliss in abundance, with-

without ever having any end. The consideration of these points ought to cause thee the more fervently to covet and desire those everlasting joyes and rest of that same most blessed life. Many men are covetous of worldly goods, honours, and earthly riches, and think both in dreaming and waking, how and by what meanes they might come thereto: and then they forget all care of their soules good, and all thoughts of the paines of hell, or of the joyes of heaven; surely these men are not wise: they are like to children that run after Butter-flies, and because they look not to their feet, they sometimes easily fall down and break their leggs. What is all the pomp, honours, riches, and jollity of this world but a Butter-flie? surely it is no more, yea, it is much lesse: Therefore, I pray thee, be covetous of the joyes of heaven, and thou shalt have honour and riches that shall last for ever:

For

For at the latter day, when worldly covetous men bring no good in their hands (becauſe all their honour and riches, which they onely made account of, are turned into nothing but ſorrow and pain) then the good men of the world, that have truly forſaken all vain honours and riches of this world, or elſe if they had them, they made no account in their hearts of them, nor did ſet their love or delight in them, but have ever lived in the peace of God, and in humility, and in hope, and ſometimes in ſorrowes or afflictions, and patiently expected the mercy of God; they (I ſay) ſhall then fully attain that which they here coveted, for they ſhall be crowned as Kings, and ſhall aſcend up with our Lord into the bliſſe of heaven. Alſo there be many other good conſiderations or thoughts (more than I can ſpeak of) that ſerve to ſtirre and raiſe a mans mind and affection to loath

the

the vanities of this world, and to desire the joyes of heaven.

These matters I have not mentioned unto thee, as if I had withall fully shewed the manner how they are exercised in a mans soul, but I have onely touched them a little, to the end thou mightest, by so much the better understand these things, for such use as thou canst best make of them.

CHAP. XV.

How a man shall doe when he feeleth no tast nor comfort in his mentall exercises.

NEvertheless I would think it were good for thee, that when thou dispossest thee to think on God, as I have before said, or in any other manner, and peradventure thou feelest no gust nor devotion in thy exercise, but onely a naked mind, and a weak will, by which thou wouldest

wouldeſt fain think on God, but canſt not; then I think it is good for thee, that thou ſtrive not too much with thy ſelf, for ſo thou mayeſt fall into greater darkneſſe, unleſſe thou knoweſt how to work more ſubtily, and more above in ſpirit, and with all quietneſſe in the ſences: But thou not knowing how to doe ſo for want of experience or skill in it, I hold it more ſecure for thee in ſuch a caſe, for to ſay thy *Pater Noſter*, and thine *Ave Maria*, or elſe thy Mattins, or to read in thy Pſalter, for that is evermore a ſure ſtandard, that will not fail, who ſo may cleave thereto he ſhall not erre: and if thou canſt by thy prayer get devotion, look then that this devotion be onely in affection, that is to ſay, in a great deſire toward God, with a ſpirituall delight, hold on then ſuch thy ſaying of thoſe vocall Prayers, and not eaſily break off; for oftentimes it happeneth, that praying with the mouth getteth

and

and keepeth devotion, and if in such a case thou cease from saying, thy devotion withall vanisheth away.

Nevertheleſſe, if devotion in prayer bring into thine heart a devout thought of the humanity of our Lord, or of any of the other matters before mentioned by me, and this thought ſhould be hindered by thy ſaying of the vocall prayers, then will it be beſt for thee to ceaſe from thy ſaying, and to feed thy mind and affection with the thought of the ſaid good matter, till it leave thee and be vaniſhed away.

CHAP. XVI.

What a man is to take heed of in his prayers and meditations.

BUt of certain things it behooveth thee to beware of in thy meditations; of ſome of them I ſhall tell thee: One is, that when thou haſt

thou haſt had a ſpirituall, or imagination of the humanity of our Lord, or of other bodily things, and thy ſoul hath been comforted and fed therewith, and afterward it paſſeth away of it ſelf, do not ſeek, as it were by maſterie, or force to hold it ſtill, for then it will turne thee into pain and bitterneſs. Alſo if it paſs not away, but dwell ſtill in thy mind, without any travell or induſtry of thine, and thou for the comfort thou findeſt in it, wilt not leave it, and thereupon it ſtill continuing with thee, cometh to bereave or hinder thee of thy ſleep at nights, or elſe in the day times hindereth thee from other good deeds, or elſe through the great fervour that it worketh in thy body, thy body or thine head by it falleth into a great feebleneſſe, then muſt thou leſſen or moderate, and ſometimes forbear ſuch exerciſe of thine, even when thou haſt moſt devotion in it, or to it, and wouldeſt

otherwiſe be moſt loath to forbear it, or part from it; and therefore thou muſt needs uſe diſcretion in the matter, for to avoid thoſe miſchiefes, or any of them, which now I have reckoned up to thee, or any other miſchief or perill that may come to thee, through indiſcreet fervour or love to thoſe thy exerciſes: and in particular, give it over when it is reaſonable time to give it over, or when thy chriſtian brother may receive harm, or take juſt offence at thee, by occaſion of thy long ſtay at ſuch thy devotions. If thou doe otherwiſe in this matter than I have told thee, I think thou doeſt not well, nor wiſely in it.

A worldly man or woman, that peradventure feeles not devotion twiſe in a year, if he (through the grace of our Lord Jeſus) feel great compunction for his ſinnes, or think ſeriouſly and devoutly on the paſſion of our Lord, or upon any other good matter, if he by occaſion

occaſion thereof, and of his devotion therein, be put from his ſleep and his reſt, for one, or two, or three nights, untill his head ake, it makes no great matter, nor will he be the worſe for it; ſuch devotion cometh but ſeldome upon ſuch perſons. But as for thee, or any other man or woman, that every day duly performeth, or hath, ſuch devotions, and intendeſt to continue in purſuing of ſuch daily exerciſes, it is expedient for thee to uſe and hold diſcretion in thy performance of thoſe thy exerciſes, and not fully to yeild and plunge thy ſelf into devotion, ſo farre as it will offer it ſelf unto thee, but moderate thy ſelf in it, and take it moderately, though it offer it ſelf to thee in abundance.

Alſo I hold it good, that thou obſerve this diſcretion in thy exerciſe, which is, that thou tarry not too long at it, that thereby thou put thy ſelf from taking thy meat, or of

thy ſleep, when the time ſhall be for taking of them, or doe give juſt cauſe of diſpleaſure or dammage to any other man, through occaſion of over-long tarrying at ſuch thy devotion: The wiſe man ſaith, That *all things have their time.*

Another thing which behooveth thee to beware of is, that when thy mind hath been imployed for a time in the imagination of the humanity of our Saviour, or any other good matter, and after this thou ſeekeſt withall the deſire of thine heart, for to have a more ſpirituall knowing or feeling of the divinity, preſſe not too much upon ſuch deſire, nor ſuffer the deſire of thine heart to tarry too long therein, as if thou wert expecting and tarrying for ſome better or higher elevation of thy ſpirit, or for a feeling that had more worth or excelling in it, than any thou haſt hitherto had, thou ſhalt not doe ſo. It is enough for thee and for me, for to have a deſire

desire and a longing to our Lord, and if he out of his grace and goodnesse will vouchsafe, over and above such desire of ours, freely, and of his own accord, to send us of his spirituall light, and open our spirituall eye, for to see or know more of him than heretofore we did or could, by our own labour and industry: let us thank him for it; but if he doe not (because we are not as yet humble enough, but were likely to grow proud, by reason of such extraordinary favours, if he bestowed them on us) or are not disposed in other respects, and namely, by cleannesse of conscience through well living, for to receive such grace and favour at his hands, then let us humbly acknowledge our own unworthinesse, and hold our selves satisfied with the desire we have of him, and with other common good thoughts, that may easily be had and used by our imagination, as thinking of our sinnes,

of Chriſts paſſion, or other ſuch like things, or elſe with ſome vocall prayers of the Pſalter, or other vocall prayers, and thank him with all our hearts, that he beſtoweth upon us any portion of his grace or favour, though it be the leaſt that any man hath. And if thou doe otherwiſe, thou mayeſt eaſily be deceived (for thy preſumption) by the ſpirit of error; for it is a great folly for a man, of his own head or wilfulneſſe, to preſſe or ſtrain himſelf too much, to get into the ſight or exerciſe of ſpirituall things, further than he ſeeth well that he hath invitation and enablement for it: For the wiſe man ſaith, that *the ſearcher of the Majeſty (of God) ſhall be oppreſſed by the glory of him* for not having humility, cleanneſſe, and worthineſſe in ſoul, for ſuch a ſight he ſhall be caſt down, and made to know himſelf better than he did through this confuſion. And there-

therefore the ſame wiſe man in another place ſaith thus, *Doe not ſeek for things that are higher, nor ſearch into things that paſſe thy ſtrength*: that is to ſay, high things that are above thy naturall reaſon and apprehenſion ſeek not after, and great matters that are above thy ability or ſtrength doe not ſearch into. By theſe words the wiſeman doth not wholly forbid us to ſeek after, and deſire the knowing and having of ſpirituall and heavenly things, but he forbideth us to ſeek for them in a prepoſterous manner, which is too ſoon, and ſooner than we are fit for them, or that God calleth us to them, as when we are as yet ſenſuall and not cleanſed from the vain love of the world; being in that degree, we are not to take upon us, as if we could or would by our labour or induſtry, or by our own wit enable our ſelves to diſcern, ſee, or know ſpirituall things, or procure in us

great feryour of the love of God, ſo that albeit we ſee, that we ſet at nought all worldly things, and it ſeem to us, that we would for Gods love forſake all the wealth, honours, and joyes of this world, yet for all this, are we unfit and indiſpoſed for to ſeek and behold ſpirituall things that are above us, untill our ſoules, through precedent exerciſes of the imagination, become to be more ſubtill, or as it were thin, or ſomewhat ſpirituall, and withall he become well mortified and ſetled in vertues, by proceſſe of time, and by increaſe in grace: For (as Saint *Gregory* ſaith) no man ſuddenly (or haſtily) becometh ſupream or perfect in grace, but beginneth with little, and proceedeth on by little and little, untill that he come to be perfect, the which God grant that we all may one day be, Amen.

Of

Of Prayer.

IN the active life is four ſorts of Prayer, Vocall, Meditation, Aſpiration, and Abnegation, of theſe Vocall is moſt imperfect, as appeares by its nothing to ſay to God but what is read or got by heart out of books, and of this kind be theſe Prayers next following.

A Prayer before dayly Exercise.

MY Most gracious Lord, give me leave to appear before thy divine Majesty, and to utter my unworthy prayers in the presence of thy Saints; behold, O Lord, not my demerits, but thy merits, and thy Sonnes sufferings, in confidence of which, I come to make known my necessities of body and mind, which I desire to utter with a pure intention, my sins with contrition, my neighbours needs with charity, my desires to know thy will and to doe it, to be able to expresse and utter this, I humbly ask thy assistance sweet Jesus, Amen.

An Exercise for morning.

1. BEing on your knees, as in the presence of God and his Angels, stirre up in you devotion by a hearty uttering of the former prayer,

prayer, or this following.

O my blessed and dear Saviour, let me, inabled by thy grace, and thy servants intercessions, be made able to praise thee, and pray to thee, sweet Jesus, Amen.

2. Thank God for preserving thee the night past, for giving thee a mind and opportunity now to pray to him, saying.

O omnipotent and eternall God, I give thee hearty thanks for having preserved me this night past, and strengthening me so by thy grace, as to be able to spend this day, and the remnant of my life, so as it may be pleasing to thee, and the benefit and edification of my neighbour, sweet Jesus, Amen.

3. Having run over your carriage the last night, for that you find your self to have been faulty in, ask pardon, and make a good resolution for the time to come; saying,

O

O my dear Lord, forgive, I beſeech thee, theſe my negligences and offences, and aſſiſt me ſo for the time to come, as I may no more offend thee; which I deſire with all my heart and ſoul, and promiſe induſtriouſly to labour to perform: Let me, I humbly crave, never want thy aſſiſtance to perform it, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

4. Conſider what ills thou art moſt inclined to, as whether not neglectfull of God graces and favours, whether not ungratefull for his benefits, &c. againſt all which, for the time to come, ſtrengthen thy ſelf with good reſolutions, imploring pardon for that paſt, and aſſiſtance to the accompliſhment of thy good purpoſes made; ſaying,

O moſt bountifull and good God, I the moſt unworthieſt of men, doe crave of thee, for thy holy Names ſake, to aid me againſt all theſe my evill inclinations and habits, and to give me a heart open to receive all

good

good inſpirations, free from all ingratitude, and as much courage to ſet on good things, as now fervour to promiſe them, and what is paſt to pardon, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

5. Call to mind all thy imployments this day, and being ſuch as religion and thy ſtate admitteth on, undertake them chearfully, as Gods commands, ſaying,

To thee, my dear Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, I offer up theſe my labours, and undertakings, and my ſelf: inlighten, I beſeech thee, ſo my underſtanding, as that I may diſcern in them thy will, and ſo inflame my ſoul with a deſire to effect it, that I may ſeek nothing elſe in them, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

6. If thou fore-ſeeſt, that ſomething will occurre in this dayes labour, contrary to nature and thy inclination, remember by whoſe permiſſion they come, and that by

by repugnances, and ſufferings, our fidelity to God is proved, and therefore chearfully prepare to receive them, though death, infamy, and reproaches, and ſay,

Moſt mercifull Redeemer, who out of thy divine goodneſſe art pleaſed to accept of ſmall ſufferings for great ſinnes, give me courage to undergoe theſe repugnances to nature, with all alacrity and chearfulneſſe, and that for the love of thee, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

An exerciſe for night.

IN the evening coming to prayer, diſpoſe thy ſelf as in the morning, then give thankes for thy preſervation that day, ask pardon for what is done amiſſe, and give thanks that they were no worſe, and ſay,

I, the moſt wickedeſt of ſinners, give all humble and poſſible thanks to thee, my moſt gracious God, for keeping me this day in ſafety, notwith-

withſtanding theſe my many demerits and ſinnes committed againſt thee, for all which, I now with teares, ask pardon, thanking thy divine goodneſſe that they were no worſe, which hadſt thou not powerfully oppoſed, by my malice and evill inclinations I ſhould have run into, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

2. Conſider how much thy ſinnes be hayneſſer, by the neglect of God, good aſpirations, and thy many promiſes made to God, and then ſay.

O my God I have ſinned againſt thee my Creator and Redeemer, after thy innumerable graces and favours beſtowed on me, my many promiſes of amendment; O that teares would waſh away my offences, and grief and ſufferings make ſatisfaction for my demerits and love, ſo unite me to thee, that that is paſt may be forgotten, and for the time to come I might remain unſeperable from thee, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

3. With

3. With your eyes lifted up to heaven adore God, and desire his protection of thee and thy friends this night, saying.

My most mercifull Lord and Redeemer, I commend into thy hands this night and ever, my self and all my friends, desiring with an humble heart all the Saints to pray with me, that this night, and my whole life, may be spent in thy services and commands, sweet Jesus Amen.

Thus without other thoughts settle your self to rest.

A Prayer to obtain the love of God.

O My Lord God and Creator, who art each moment bestowing thy gifts on me, leave not my heart and soul uninflamed with thy love, and what the remembrance of the need I have of thee, nor the power thou hast to punish, nor the desires of the joyes of heaven will not doe, let gratitude and thy good-

nesse

neſſe work in me, for to be without it, heaven and earth will be burthenſome to me, ſweet Jeſus, Amen.

Of Meditation.

THe ſecond ſort of prayer uſed in the active life is Meditation, whoſe matter may be any part of Scripture, or ſuch good ſubject the ſoul reliſheth; its form, preparation, conſideration, and concluſion.

Preparation is the ſame uſed in vocall prayer. if thou addeſt reading of the matter to be meditated on.

Conſideration containeth the mentall diſcourſe, uſed by the Mediator on that matter to be meditated on; the affections it draweth from that diſcourſe, and its good reſolutions.

Concluſion containeth a thanksgiving to God for ſome good received, or evill avoided, and having petitioned

petitioned for our ſelves and our neighbours ends, with an oblation of our ſelves.

The matter we will take for an example how to meditate, is theſe words of Saint *John*, *He riſeth from ſupper, and layeth aſide his garment, and having taken a towel girdeth himſelf, after that he put water into a Baſon, and began to waſh the feet of his Diſciples, and to wipe them with a towel wherewith he was girded.*

This read, and you prepared, diſcourſe to your ſelf thus (or as the holy Ghoſt ſhall dictate to you, which is ever beſt) ſaying,

Conſider O my ſoul, how ſweet Jeſus riſing from ſupper, in a meek and humble manner, girds himſelf with a towel, and firſt kneeling down at the feet of Saint *Peter*, with great humility waſheth his feet, dryeth them with the towel he was girt with, and kiſſeth them, and going on his knees from one

to

to one, doth the like to all his Disciples, I to *Iudas*, whose feet was toul-ed in journies made to sell him to be crucified.

If such discourse stirre up an affection and love to Christ (which is the end of meditation) utter these words (or such the holy Ghost dictates to thee.)

O my God, Saviour, and Redeemer, I adore, love, and honour thee for those humiliations of thine caused by my sinnes, and prosecuted for my instruction.

Affection begets resolution, the last part of consideration, which may be these or the like, never after this to seek revenge, never to exalt our selves above others, never to refuse any humiliation for our neighbours good, never to glory in our selves, or any created thing, but to be an humble follower of Christ, and lover of him and all his creatures and this for Christs sake.

After

After this followeth thanks-giving, petition, and oblation (which be the things included in conclusion, and may be uttered in these or such like words.

I give thee thankes my most benign Saviour, for this good lesson of charity and humiliation, and desire thee with my whole heart, that I never want memory to remember it, nor ever strength of mind to put it in execution, In requitall of which, I make a present to thy sacred Majesty of my self, intentions, and purposes.

This kind of prayer is more perfect than the former, by reason a soul proceedeth searching and enquiring by the understanding, into the matter to be meditated on, that it may move the will to affect good and hate evill, yet it is imperfect, by reason of its want of love, which appeares in that, the will needs the reasons of the understanding to force it to love, or to give it reasons why it should doe so.

The

The third sort of Prayer.

THe third sort of Prayer is Aspirations (called improperly, forced or immediate acts) and a short fervent and quiet kind of prayer, put forth like darts, and used in a kind of colloquy with God, to keep the will inflamed with the love of him, and are these, or the like.

O my God, O my Creator, O the Purchaser of my soul, and its desires, when shall I be absorped in the love of thee, when united to thee, when free from all terrestriall affections, and love to creatures, O that I was free from such affections, and self love, O that I was induced with vertue: O most sweet, most amiable, most beautifull, most powerfull and good, who art inthroned in heaven, draw me thither to thee, let me there enjoy thee, behold thee, and sing praises there to thee, world without end: O foun-

tain

tain and ſource of all that is good, piouſly and mercifully, commmnicate thy ſelf to my ſoul for thy mercies ſake, O thee I deſire with all my heart, all my interiors and affections; To thee I aſpire to come, with thee ſo to fall in love, as to neglect my ſelf and all earthly conſolations, and to cleave to thee in all accidents that ſhall happen, be they proſperity or adverſity &c.

This kind of prayer is more perfect than meditation, by reaſon it containeth more love, and needs not the reaſons of the underſtanding to move the ſoul actually to love God; yet it is imperfect, in that a ſoul in this ſtate cannot long uphold her ſelf in the actuall love of God, without ſome ſuch amorous prayers to inflame it, which elſe by reaſon of its littleneſſe, it would not long ſubſiſt in actuall love, not having its love yet rooted in it, by which comes actuall adheiſin in ſpirit to God.

Of

Of Abnegation the fourth ſort of Prayer.

ABnegation is a continuall acceptation of the will of God, and a totall ſubjection of our ſelves thereunto, denying our own will in all things contrary to Gods will, which a ſoul performeth while ſhe is uttering interior acts and familiar colloquies, and likewiſe in all her undertakings, they being undertaken and performed meerly to doe Gods will, or by ſaying vocally or mentally that ſhe ſubmitteth her ſelf in all things to the will of God; that ſhe deſireth nothing, nor undertaketh any thing, but that his will be done in her, and in all creatures: That ſhe intendeth or ſeeketh any thing in her prayers and imployments, but that which ſhall be moſt pleaſing to him: That ſhe thinketh her whole happineſſe conſiſteth in the performance of his will:

That

That she regardeth not her own losse, profit, consolation, or aridities, &c.

This kind of prayer is by so much the more perfect than the other, by how much it is lesse mingled with self love, and more founded in the love of God, for a soul in this kind of prayer seemeth to have forgot or cast off her own will, and seekes now in all things the divine will.

The imperfection of this kind of prayer is its insufficiency to continue without renuing acts of resignation, yet it is the perfectest in the active life.

Note 1. To stay in any of these kinds of Prayer when a soul is fit for a higher kind of prayer, is a hinderance to spirituall progresse.

2. The seeking of gust, comfort, or consolation in prayer, is an enemy to spirituall advancement.

3. To use insufficient and undeterminate times of prayer.

FINIS.